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in the space of a few months, although the whole had been occupied by streets for several centuries. We daily perceive in Scotland that white clover appears almost as soon as the heath is destroyed, with which lands had been occupied before: and it is probable that corn, pulse, and grass seeds, if they have been sound and good at first, and properly kept, will be found quite fit for seed, even when a good many years old.

To the Editor of the Belfast Magazine.

SIR,

I FELT much gratified in finding the Report of our Maryborough Institution inserted in your last number. The determination which you have expressed, of turning your attention to matters peculiarly relating to the welfare of this country, is praiseworthy, and deserves every encouragement.

If you should approve of the following *trifling*, though *useful* scheme of promoting the health, comfort, and I may venture to add, decent, if not moral conduct, of common labourers, I should be obliged to you to procure its insertion.

I had been struck, as most men of common humanity I presume often have been before, with the misery which many labourers experience in seasons wet or cold, from the insufficiency of clothing, as well as from its frail and tattered texture.

I purchased, in the first instance, a quantity of frize, and had jackets made for my workmen, intending to stop from them, on a settlement, the cost, exclusive, however, of the buttons, &c. which I gave to them as an encouragement to come into my scheme.

I found, however, that it was much easier for me to give them jackets, than for them to pay me the price of them. Some, on getting the jackets, were regardless of paying for them; some were either turned out, or quitted the work; and even those who were honestly disposed felt the weight of the payment, drawn at once from their wages.

I tried this experiment for two or three years; at last I devised the following simple plan:—I had agreed to pay my labourers the standing price of

fifteen pence a day for their work. I took the opportunity of the winter season (when I knew that they would not leave me) to inform them of my determination, that I would pay but thirteen pence a day, but that, in case of good behaviour I should give them a *gratuity* of two pence additional a day, reserving to myself the privilege of appropriating this money as I chose. By this means I avoided the possibility of being obliged to pay this additional two-pence a day, which I might have been compelled to, had it been stopped out of wages; and I constantly was enabled to hold a tight reign over my workmen; and it is sufficiently plain that none would leave my work as long as they had a considerable sum depending upon their staying with me—I was enabled farther to check them in drunkenness.

My steward now keeps, in his workmen's account book, a running account of the *total* number of days (which requires but one column, and which is the chief trouble) each man has worked. Whenever a settlement is necessary, it is only referring to this column, which is continued from week to week, and the sum is at once seen to which each man is entitled. I am enabled by this means to clothe my workmen without expense to myself, or, I may venture to add, without much expense to *themselves*. I consider that scarce a man of them feels inconvenience by this arrangement, as, in fact, a considerable part of the price of the jacket would most probably be squandered. The jacket is made of frize, lined with drugget; it is fashioned after a shooting jacket, meeting close round the throat, and close round the middle of the thigh, being cut straight, consequently the breast, the most important part of the body, is completely covered and protected. The prime cost of the jacket complete, in our country, near which the frize is manufactured, is about fourteen shillings. I buy the frize in the piece, which causes a material saving to the labourer. I generally have had them made and delivered to them about the beginning of winter. The month of October would be the best season, by which means they have the full benefit of a

warm and close-grained cloth for winter, and its being a little thread-bare improves it for summer use.

I had first determined to appropriate the two pence a day in the following manner....one penny to provide clothing....one halfpenny for provision for aged and sick labourers....one halfpenny for a stock-purse, to be divided once a year.

Any person adopting the principle, may adapt it to his own views of what is most beneficial to his labourers. Nothing, I conceive, is more important than clothing. Several boys in my employment have paid from fifteen to eighteen shillings for clothing; a blessing indeed it is to them in particular, as the parents in general would drive them into the field half naked, robbing their backs to glut their own stomachs. Your pages are of too much consequence, I presume, to admit of stating fully all the advantages attending this simple plan. To talk of the trouble of it, would be really ridiculous. Any person who gives the experiment a fair trial (if he has a warm feeling in his breast for the distresses of his fellow-men) will thank me for this communication, and you for giving it publicity.

PHILADELPHOS.

P. S. Should the account of the Maryborough Institution excite sufficient interest in the breast of any, to urge them to "go and do likewise," they can receive any further assistance and information, by writing (post paid) to the Secretary, at Maryborough.

*For the Belfast Monthly Magazine.*

EXTRAORDINARY PROPHECY OF MERLIN'S, ON THE EVE OF BEING COMPLETED.

THE following curious letter was inserted in one of the London prints in the year 1801; it is now thought worthy of republication, because the principal event foretold in the prediction it contains, has every probability of coming to pass in the course of the month of October. Men of much eminence for judgment and learning have not hesitated to express astonishment at some of the articles contained in Merlin's

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prophecies; this one is perhaps as extraordinary as any of them. No person of sense will give way to superstition of any kind, and a little consideration will show that prophecies of this nature can form no rational guide for the direction of any man's conduct in any particular; it is only presented as a literary curiosity, and if we cannot account for the means by which Merlin seemed to dive into futurity, except by the old way of cutting the knot, it is but one wonder in common with hundreds, with which we are surrounded in the natural world, which the most profound philosophers could never unravel:

LETTER SIGNED OSIRIS.

"Being lately in a company where the conversation turned on the extraordinary appearance of the planets this year, all of which were to be seen at once on the northern side of the ecliptic, I set about to discover in old books of astronomy, whether such a phenomenon had been predicted or no. A friend of mine referred me to Merlin's prophecies, published by Hawkins, in the reign of Henry VIII. in which, he said, this circumstance was alluded to; but in terms so loose that nothing could be made of it, and which might be applied to any period of the reader's fancy, as well as the present. I found it accordingly in what are called Merlin's Centuries; and the passage seemed to me so curious, that I resolved to publish it, with such explanations as in my mind render it very intelligible, and strongly pointed to the commencement of the present century. Of this let others judge as they please: I here send you the whole passage referred to, in the very spelling of the time, as I transcribed it:

Three workend wekes in hondredes tould,  
A dozeine whol and half biholde:  
Ther comyth one off doutefulle size,  
Quhom Albione shal heighly prize.  
Though at fyrst dawne he chaunge her  
name,  
And Islondes twane make bote one reame;  
Though derth and famyne rage withyn,  
And gould and corn beu hardlie sene;  
Withouten ben youre fame possess't,  
Be North and Suth, and Este and West.

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